

University, visited the island for the first time.

During their mission they were accompanied by Prof. Marchetti, Director of the Department de Ciencias de la Construcción from the Universidad de Chile. On the island they received the collaboration of Mr. Claudio Cristino, and José Miguel Ramírez, head of the Rapa Nui National Park, CONAF.

Their preliminary report indicates that the instability of the Orongo site is real and they have suggested several preventive measures. Following these, CONAF has restricted access to the areas in question: the sacred precinct of Mata Ngarau and the terrace beyond it. These measures will be kept until the site has been stabilized and adequate paths been provided for the safety of tourists and the preservation of the site.

*A. Elena Charola, WMF Easter Island Program Consultant,
Great Neck, Long Island, November 24th, 1995.*

• Toxic Substances Unloaded on Easter Island

Congressman Carlos Cantero said that toxic materials are being unloaded at Anakena beach. The directors of the Consejo of Ancianos informed him that Brotec S.A., the company repairing the airport runway, had authority to unload only heavy equipment there, and the port of Hanga Piko was to be used for toxic material. However, they say, the Minister of Defense gave a counterorder authorizing that everything could be unloaded on the dock at Anakena. The Consejo contacted Greenpeace who has sent a representative to stop the unloading, and they also contacted Codeff (Corporación de Defensa de la Flora y Fauna) who will lend assistance.

The new resolution authorizes beaching and tying up a barge at Anakena beach to unload equipment, cement and asphalt.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, 23 and 27 November

- Six students of the Workshop of Communication and Journalism at the school 'Lorenzo Baeza Vega' won first prize in a regional contest with the theme "Esperanza, sueño de los jóvenes despiertos" [Hope, dream of the wide-awake youth]. In it they describe life on the island and imagine what an ideal school would be like. It was a national contest. The prize: a round trip to Santiago for the six.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

✉ *Dear Editor:*

It was interesting to read in your most recent issue (Vol. 9:3) about Pavel's experiments in moving the *moai* (we all would like to know exactly how they were moved). It is disturbing, however, to see experiments continuing to be carried out using actual archaeological artifacts, rather than models. In light of the recent damage to the *moai* from La Serena, which was broken while being transported for a museum exhibit in Barcelona, there should be some restrictions designed to prevent this type of accident from occurring in the future.

Experiments began on moving actual *moai* in 1955 with



Fig. 1: The statue at Tongariki that was 'swivelled' and moved by Heyerdahl. Today it stands unstabilized

islanders, under the direction of Thor Heyerdahl, dragging a *moai* on a wood sledge at Anakena to determine how many people would be needed to move a statue (Heyerdahl and Ferdon, 1991:pl.60b; pg. 371; see also Heyerdahl 1958, facing page 289). In 1986, as Pavel mentioned, Heyerdahl once again experimented with moving a "discarded" *moai* in Hanga Roa (this *moai* now resides at the R. P. Sebastian Englert Museum on the island). The statue, weighing approximately 4 to 5 tons, was moved some five meters by swiveling and twisting it by means of ropes fastened to the head and base so that it "walked". Heyerdahl *et al.* (1989:60) state: "At first it proved extremely difficult to twist the image forward because the two teams pulling did not properly coordinate the exact movements of their respective jerks. The forward-twisting team had to delay their effort until the sideways pulling team had tilted the image on edge. . . . At this very moment the forward-twisting team had to jerk before the image fell back on its broad base." Although the participants were pleased with the success of these experiments as they did not cause damage to the *moai*'s base (which had a modern cement base added to it long before the experiment), some of the stresses (jerking) created by this experiment may have caused the statue to weaken and break at the neck when, later on, it was moved to the Museum. It was subsequently repaired.

A *moai* presently located near Tongariki which made a trip to Japan for an exhibition and fortunately was returned safely in 1983 (Figure 1), was used for additional experiments by Heyerdahl (1989:62). It was moved by tilting and twisting it with ropes. Moved from its former stabilized position, it now stands unsupported. A photograph taken shortly afterward (see Figure 2) shows a large chunk broken from the base, a result of this experiment.

Van Tilburg (1990a, b) has described the history of damage to Rapa Nui statues from attempts to make moulds and she states that, due to many variables such as location and extent of natural deterioration, that it is impossible to predict without extensive study how a *moai* might react to mould-making.



Fig. 2: The base of the statue shown in Figure 1 clearly shows a chunk broken out of the back side, a direct result of the experiments carried out.

For the same reasons, it is impossible to know how safe it would be to try and move one for experimental purposes. Although permission was "restricted to statues that had been displaced from their original sites or contexts in modern times" (Heyerdahl 1989:60), is it ethical to conduct experiments moving any *moai* when we now have the technology to make replicas (as Pavel has done in the past) or employ computer models (cf. Van Tilburg, 1995)? The stresses associated with experiments using actual *moai* may have caused some of the damage described above. Regulations must be designed and implemented so that Easter Island's statues, both on and off the island, are protected from the possibility of further damage, whether it be for experiments on how they were moved, or for transportation to and from museum exhibits.

Antoinette Padgett, University of California, Santa Barbara

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Van Tilburg, J.A. 1990b. Respect for Rapa Nui: Exhibition and Conservation of Easter Island stone statues. *Antiquity* 64:249-58.

Van Tilburg, J.A. 1995. Moving the *moai*. *Archaeology* 48:34-43.

✉ The Institute of Polynesian Languages and Literatures and the journal *Rongorongo Studies* are pleased to announce that the winner of the Polynesian Literary Competition for 1995, whose theme area was Hawai'i, is Kihei de Silva of Kailua, O'ahu, Hawai'i, with the contemporary poem "Ka Pa'u o Hi'iaka") "The Skirt of Hi'iaka"). Kihei de Silva, who is a native Hawaiian, has been awarded a Certificate of Award and a cash prize of US\$ 250. The winning poem, with accompanying English translation, has been published in *Rongorongo Studies* 5 (1995):35-7.

The adjudicators for the 1995 Competition were the acclaimed expert for Polynesian Studies Prof John Charlot of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (Honolulu) and the well-known Hawaiian poet and educator Prof Larry Kimura of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Permanent moderators were Dr H.G.A. Hughes of Clwyd, Wales, and Dr Steven Roger Fischer of Auckland, New Zealand.

✉ Dear Editor,

I consider the September issue of *RNJ* excellent again. Of course I was flattered to read that Robert Langdon mentioned my "exhaustive treatment" of all the narratives about Roggeveen's journey. But Dalrymple makes a big mistake by saying (on your page 82): "Whoever considers attentively Roggeveen's description of Easter Island must see the affinity to the Peruvian manners and religion", because it was not Roggeveen who made that description but one of his sailors (as told to a man in a bar) upon his return to Amsterdam and translated by someone else. It was nice to read that someone concluded a "Peruvian connection" with Rapa Nui already two centuries before Thor Heyerdahl, but as Jacob Roggeveen never came any nearer to Peru than Juan Fernández Island, the conclusion is entirely Dalrymple's and that weakens the argument of Robert Langdon.

It was also a pleasant surprise to read in the latest issue an evocative poem entitled 'Rapa Nui' by Jan Slauerhoff indeed "the most gifted of the Dutch poets" between the two World Wars and surrounded by a romantic aura. My stepfather was a friend of Jan Slauerhoff: in their student days they used to read their poems (admittedly not of the same quality) to each other in smoky cafes on the Amsterdam canals. I am also an admirer of his poems as well as his prose. The writer of the article himself admits about Slauerhoff that "there is no positive evidence that he ever made landfall on the Island" and that therefore the suggestion that he visited Rapa Nui is quite speculative. This is indeed no overstatement if we consider some facts:

1) Slauerhoff published his poem in 1923, aged 25, maybe it was even written earlier, at that moment he had never been outside Europe yet.

2) In 1923 Slauerhoff finished his studies not in Arts (is this

a bizarre non-translation of the Dutch word 'arts' which means general practitioner?) but in medicine.

3) Slauerhoff was indeed a "*poète maudit*", he was much too undisciplined and unconventional to become a doctor in a tidy Dutch village, so he applied for a job as a ship's doctor and in 1925 was accepted by a shipping company running a service between Java, China and Japan, that is along the Western shores of the Pacific. During stopovers in Shanghai and Macao he visited and got his inspiration in the seedy parts of the harbour front: opium dens and brothels. This ruined his health, so in 1927 he returned to Holland for recovery. In 1928 he became a ship's doctor again, this time for a company running a service between the Netherlands, the Caribbean and the Atlantic Coast of South America. One can be sure that these shipping companies running commercial services on a timetable basis never touched Easter Island. Therefore it is too romantic to say that Slauerhoff "traveled around the South Seas for most of his life." He was a ship's doctor on vessels running a regular service between big ports until he died in 1936 from malaria and pneumonia.

4) One can therefore only conclude that Slauerhoff must have got the data for his poem on Rapa Nui from publications by others and the author of the article must certainly be complimented that he found one with a date and Slauerhoff's signature on it that he had read when only 15 years old.

That Slauerhoff is still being read today and greatly admired comes from his restlessness, dissatisfaction with normal life, and passionate times which he showed by his identification with vagabonds, discoverers and pirates. One of his titles: "Foam and Ash" may be considered symbolic for his work.

Herbert von Saher, Bloemendaal, The Netherlands

REVIEWS



Rapa Nui. Histoire de L'île de Pâques. Text by Georgia Lee, photographs by Toni Catany. Editions Olizane, 11, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, CH-1205, Geneva, Switzerland. 1995. In French.
Review by Paul G. Bahn.

Books on Rapa Nui tend to be either overviews of the island's history and culture, or albums of photographs. This, as far as I am aware, is the first which is both at once, and it succeeds admirably in both categories. It is a large format book; its first part comprises a text by Georgia Lee, together with a series of drawings and black-and white photographs, mostly by Lee but with some by Marcia Opal, Bill Hyder and Mark Oliver, plus museums in Chile. Only one or two of the museum photographs are not quite up to scratch. The text, a rapid survey of every aspect of the island's culture, is both readable and accurate, as one would expect from the editor of this august journal. There are notes, a glossary of terms, and a succinct bibliography but not, alas, an index. I spotted only a couple of minor typos, and the French translation seems fine. The book exists in Italian, Spanish and French

editions, but not, as yet, in English. It is to be hoped that this omission will be rectified in the near future. The true glory of this book, however, comes from the second part, the collection of colour plates by Catalan photographer Toni Catany. Many of these are outstanding, and they include several fold-out plates, most notably a spectacular 4-page super-wide-angle shot of the almost-restored Ahu Tongariki. Whatever the merits and demerits of this particular restoration—and one hopes that full details will eventually emerge of this project so we can assess its accuracy and desirability—it makes an undeniably impressive sight, and the book is probably worth buying for this picture alone. □

PUBLICATIONS

➤Anon. 1995. Polynesian Cloud. *The Nation*, 2 October 1995:336. [A scathing editorial about the resumption of French nuclear testing and the recent protests in Tahiti].

➤Dalton, Bill. 1995. *Indonesia Handbook*, 6th edition. Moon Publications, Box 3040 Chico, CA 95927. ISBN: 1-56691-062-5. Paper cover, 1330 pages plus index; 250 maps. Black and white photos and drawings, phrase book and glossary included. \$25.00

The island nation of Indonesia has 17,110 islands which may explain why this new edition of the *Indonesia Handbook* has 1330 pages and could serve as ballast. Every imaginable tidbit of information, be it in the form of tree-climbing fish or komodo dragons, mountain trekking or monuments, puppet plays or batik fabrics, can be found in this amazingly informative book. It even tells you how to deal with monkeys, should you be tempted to offer them a snack. The details, descriptions and general knowledge in the book reveal how well the author knows his subject; and the sections on censorship, civil liberties and corruption clearly reveal why the *Indonesia Handbook* has been banned in that country for two decades.

The *Indonesia Handbook* is a good read and detailed enough to be used as a reference to the area. It may, in fact, tell you far more than you ever cared to know. But if you are contemplating a trip to Indonesia, don't leave home without this excellent guide.

➤Edwards, E. and S. Millerstrom. 1995. Peintures rupestres de la vallée de Eiaone à Hiva Oa. *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Océaniques*, No. 267, Tome XXIII, No. 5: 5-17.

➤Fischer, Steven Roger. 1995. Preliminary evidence for cosmogonic texts in Rapanui's *rongorongo* inscriptions. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 104(3):303-321. This is an important paper, the closest we have come to a 'breakthrough' in understanding *rongorongo* script. Fischer provides significant evidence that the studied texts contain creation chants and he postulates that *rongorongo* was more than a mere mnemonic device. Although still not 'deciphered', this paper contains exciting new insights into